



Volume 1, No. 4

September 2010

ClickBank & ClickBank Pirate

By James L. Paris

ClickBank (www.clickbank.com) is a network of affiliate opportunities, and it's one for which we gave an overview in last month's edition of the Insider. It's becoming very popular very quickly, and we have already received a lot of feedback, including many questions, here at Christian Internet Income about ClickBank, so this month we want to go back to the subject and cover it some more, and also discuss more specifically a neat opportunity called *ClickBank Pirate*.

OK...a review of ClickBank. First off, go to www.clickbank.com to get started. It is free to join. When you get to the home page at ClickBank, look to the top of the page for the "Sign Up" link which is where this all begins for you.

So, what *is* ClickBank? Well, ClickBank can be a few, different meaningful things to you, but for the sake of the current discussion, we're going to talk about ClickBank in terms of what it offers in the realm of affiliate selling; that is, to go into ClickBank, pick out some products to sell, and begin selling them and earning affiliate commissions. Now, there is the other side to this, which we will get into later in this issue, which is that you yourself may want to create a product and make it available for *other* people to sell. In that scenario, you would be sitting in the role of what we call the vendor, where you create a product that you're willing to let others sell for you in exchange for paying your "sales force" a commission. As I said, we're not

going to get into that within the confines of this discussion; we're going to talk strictly about the affiliate opportunity for now. Elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter, we will engage in a discussion of how to penetrate the vendor side of ClickBank, which will then give you access to both sides of the ClickBank opportunity.

There are a few things that make ClickBank unique in this world of affiliate opportunities. First of all, all of the products that they make available through their program are *digital products*. Again, there are no physical products that are being fulfilled via this opportunity; they are *all* digital products. There are thousands and thousands of these digital products available through ClickBank, products that take the form of everything from computer software, to ebooks, to videos, and more; these are all products that you can sign up to sell when you are a member of ClickBank, and the ease of delivery and use of digital products is fast making them more popular than physical formats of information delivery.

The fact that ClickBank does not sell physical products is important in more ways than one. As you know, Amazon has an affiliate opportunity, and many of you may be participating in that currently; we certainly participate in that here at Christian Money.com. Of course, Amazon sells physical products, and as such, they have to account for all of the costs associated with physical products. Take books, for example; a book has to be

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printed, it has to be shipped out, Amazon has to make its cut of the money, the author and publisher have to make their cuts, and there are other expenses, as well; in other words, there are a lot of hands in the pie of a physical book product. That's not the case at ClickBank, which is largely why the commissions are incredibly high (our second difference). It is standard procedure for you to make 50% or more as a commission on every sale you make through your ClickBank opportunity, whereas over at Amazon, it's typical to make 6 or 8 percent.

Once you've signed up, you'll click on the "Marketplace" link, and then click on "Find Products" so you can begin your search for products that are appropriate for you to sell. For example, let's say your website is about money. You might start by plugging in the word combination "business and investing" into the "Find Products" search mechanism, and browse all of the product possibilities that are returned from your search. At this point in the discussion, let's assume that you already have signed up for a ClickBank account. Given that, you would review the returned results with an eye to selecting one that you want to promote. There is actually a "Promote" button associated with each of the products, and when you click on one, you are provided with a form into which you plug your own, unique account nickname. Once you do that, you are presented with different ways to put the code for the product on your site. There are also usually a multitude of banner ads and other ad options the product has provided that you can use in your effort to help sell it.

Now, let me emphasize that, in my experience, a good many of the products on here (ClickBank) are not products that a respect-



able person would want to be selling. Some of it is outright junk, in my opinion. Let's be honest...there are a lot of people who, in their creation of an e-product, are motivated solely by the idea of having something...anything...to sell, and so the quality of the product they ultimately devise reflects that shallow motivation. However, there are also plenty of terrific products available, too, and so it is incumbent upon you to look around in order to find those that are worthy of selling. To that end, I would heartily recommend that you always buy a product yourself before agreeing to promote it. Of course, assuming you end up looking for several products to promote, you will end up buying several products yourself, but to be fair, that's your investment in finding the winners.

Let me say a few more words about the matter of expense. Remember, this is a business, just like if you were working to succeed at having a flower shop, a bakery, a sandwich shop, whatever; you don't have the same sorts of expenses for physical components, like a warehouse, storefront, or physical inventory, but you still have to make some measure of a financial investment in all of this. The great thing about the Internet businesses you can own is that, compared to those other, more traditional types of opportunities, this *is* dirt-cheap, by comparison.

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Moving on...one thing to note is that with each of the products, there are statistics at the bottom of each product listing, statistics that provide valuable information about payout levels and rates, as well as other relevant information for a potential promoter of a given product. To learn more about the statistics and what they mean, you can click on the "Help" link located at the top of any ClickBank site page. When you get to the "Help" page look for the "Finding Products to Promote" link and click on that. On the page that follows, you will find a great section that discusses how to interpret the various statistics quoted underneath each product that you can promote. That particular subsection is called "What Marketplace Stats Mean," and it goes a long way to clarifying the information on which you will rely significantly to determine if you want to sell a given product.

Another great aspect of the ClickBank "Help" section is that you can actually gain a lot of helpful information about marketing, more generally, from the area. For example, in the "Help" section, under "Affiliate Guides," you will see a link called "Common Ways to Promote Products." The material discusses ways that you can drive traffic to the ClickBank product(s) you're promoting, but you can also use the information to help drive traffic to other products you are promoting and selling that may have no relationship whatsoever to ClickBank. Topics like "Article Marketing," "Niche Sites and Blogs," and "Search Engine Marketing" are covered in that section, and these are certainly topics that will have relevance to you far outside of the confines of whatever ClickBank products you may be promoting, so that whole "Help" area inside of ClickBank can be a pretty useful resource for you, even if you didn't actually sell any of the products.

Again, then...so what is ClickBank? It's an affiliate network of digital products that pay very high commissions, far higher than you are likely used to seeing from any other Internet-based affiliate network resource. Very good stuff.

ClickBank Pirate

I wanted to provide another overview of ClickBank for those of you who contacted us since our last newsletter issue, seeking some further clarification, so we have done that up to this point. However, I want to move on from there now and begin discussing the opportunity of *ClickBank Pirate*, which is one of many ways you can exploit the ClickBank opportunity in greater measure. That said, you may find that the ClickBank Pirate opportunity is something you may not want to utilize, but even if that is the case, do not disregard the information and walk away from it; there's a lot you can learn from it, even if you don't want to participate in the opportunity specifically.

Before we move on, let's mention what ClickBank Pirate is, in general; ClickBank Pirate is a system that provides you with multiple ways to automate and intensify your participation (and rewards) in the ClickBank sales process. If no one is offended, I'll call it sort of a "ClickBank on Steroids" kind of thing.

Let me mention right up front that while ClickBank is free to join, the ClickBank Pirate opportunity is *not* free. There are different fee structures, but one of the most common is \$67 up front, with an ongoing fee of \$37 per month that has to be paid to stay in the program. That said...please, please, please...do not send me any hate mail, or cease reading this article, because I'm dis-

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cussing a program that has a fee associated with it. First of all, this is not something you have to do...not at all. This is an excellent opportunity, in my opinion, but it is by no means something in which you have to participate in order to succeed at ClickBank. As you know, we focus largely on those opportunities that are free to enter, but that does not mean that every single opportunity that we happen to think is good will be free. Again, I go back to something I said earlier about ClickBank when we were discussing the whole matter of buying samples of the products you go on to promote: This is a business; while this one may have ample opportunity for one to get involved for little or no cost, from time to time, it may make sense to spend some money on your venture. For some of you, this ClickBank Pirate may be a good example of that.

Also, as I said, there is plenty to learn here even if you decide against the ClickBank Pirate opportunity, so you should stay tuned, regardless.

For the purpose of this illustrative discussion, we will assume that one is a member of ClickBank Pirate. When you go to the home page, www.cbpirate.com, you will scroll to the bottom of that page and click on "Members Login." From there, you'll be presented with the main Members page which will have different clicks on which to click that are arranged like a treasure map, so the visual is sort of fun. Anyway, one of the links is called "Access Packs," and it is about Access Packs that I want to speak right now.

Now...when you go into ClickBank, you will see that there are thousands and thousands of digital products that you can sell; you should know that by now. Some of the products are

really good products, and they pay very high commissions. However, there is a weakness; the weakness is that they don't really provide the specific tools to help you promote the product. For some people, that's not a problem, but for many others, having that sort of help can make all the difference. What the people at ClickBank Pirate did was that they took ClickBank products that they regard as good, winning products, and created all of the promotional tools to sell those products, things like banner ads, "squeeze" pages (a web page that captures someone's email address), sample posts that you can use on Twitter, sample emails that you can send out, and a bunch of other really useful, helpful sales tools for the benefit of the selected ClickBank products.

OK, so to get started with this, if you're a member of ClickBank Pirate, and you're at the main page for members, you'll click on the "Access Packs" link. When you do that, you'll be brought to a page that has the ClickBank products listed for which an array of great promotional tools is provided. For purposes of this article, I'm going to cite one of the products on the list, and use it as my illustrative example. The product I'm going to cite is called *Keyword Elite 2*. Now, the first thing I'm going to do, actually, is to simply do a search of that product at the standard ClickBank website (www.clickbank.com). I can use the entry as a reference point. For example, I see (at this writing) that I can earn \$42 for every sale I make of that product. Great. Now, as a member of ClickBank Pirate, I have access to the promotional tools that have been created for the benefit of this particular product, *Keyword Elite 2*. When I click on the product listing inside of Pirate, I am brought to a page that shows me all of the promotional

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tools that are available to me, tools which include the graphical ads for my website (banner ads, animations, etc.), as well as other tools like “squeeze” pages.

One question that comes up from people looking at the ClickBank Pirate opportunity and perhaps balking at the idea of paying an ongoing fee for the use of these tools is, “Why can’t I just sell this product (Keyword Elite 2, in this case) on my own?” The answer, of course, is that you absolutely can sell it on your own—no question; simply because a given ClickBank product has also found favor at ClickBank Pirate and now has an array of pre-fabricated marketing tools associated with it in no ways obligates you to buy those tools in addition to signing on to promote the product. All of your promotional efforts can be entirely your own. That said, these marketing tools are excellent and you have no access to them if you are not a member of ClickBank Pirate. The question you have to answer for yourself is, “Do you see these materials, for the cost you’re paying to have them, adding an appropriate level of value to your marketing efforts?” Personally, I’m a believer in taking advantage of every sort of seemingly-beneficial marketing opportunity that’s available, assuming it’s not cost-prohibitive to do so. Of course, much of what I do is free; some of what I do, in the area of marketing, requires me to pay some money. As far as I’m concerned, all of these efforts work together in a neat symbiosis to yield for my business the desired results.

What’s sort of cool, too, is that you can actually sell the ClickBank Pirate product as an affiliate, in the same way that you can sell the countless numbers of other products that are available through ClickBank. So, let’s

say you have access to even just a few hundred people, perhaps through your blog or website, your Twitter account, Facebook, etc., or any combination thereof; you could start promoting the Pirate product among the members of your various networks, and do so in a way that requires you to make none of the “pushy” sorts of efforts with which we’ve become familiar from the days of multi-level marketing hard sales and that sort of thing.

What’s nice, too, about the Pirate product, in particular, is because of the fact that fees are monthly, it provides you with a residual income. Unlike products that are purchased one time, the Pirate product is purchased monthly, if you will, and so you are earning a residual income from each of your buyers for as long as they stay with it.

Honestly, you don’t even really need to know what you’re doing; all you need to do is to drive people to a specific web address. You can get into this for \$67 down and an ongoing monthly payment of \$37, and for that nominal cost, you are provided with *12 different turn-key businesses*.

In the end, I talk so much about ClickBank, and will continue to do so, largely because we want to be able to address those people who, for whatever reason, like the idea of making money from the Internet but who seem disinclined to having a website or blog of their own. Let me be clear: I think it’s still best for you to have your own unique “signature,” from a marketing standpoint, which would come in the form of your own website or blog, and mechanisms like ClickBank Pirate are best used as supplements to that presence, but either way, this is a tremendous opportunity that is so unique that it may well revolutionize the affiliate business.

Getting Started as a Seller with ClickBank

By James L. Paris

Clickbank provides you with a variety of ways to make money, but so far we've spent our time discussing how to make money with ClickBank as an *affiliate*...that is, as someone who makes money by selling products that others have created and made available for sale. In terms of "elbow grease," that is the easiest way to make money through ClickBank, because all you're doing is signing up to be a promoter of someone else's product; as an affiliate, you're not having to create anything on behalf of the sales process.

In this article, we're going to reverse the discussion, in essence; here, we're going to be the vendor, creating the products for others to sell.

The first step to getting started as a seller with ClickBank is to create your product. Generally, the products you create for ClickBank have to be *digital download* products...that is, products that are made available and transmitted through the Internet in a digital format; they are distinguishable from, and are really the opposite of, physical products. Books are a great example of the difference between the two formats; we all know what a physical book is and looks like, while an ebook is something that, when purchased, has no physical form; it is downloaded and read right from your computer (sure, you could technically print out an ebook from your computer, but you know what I mean).

The only exception to the digital requirement for products at ClickBank comes up if you want to make available some sort of physical product as a *bonus* to the digital product. For example, someone might want to make the offer that if you buy his ebook, he will also send you a free DVD with some sort of additional information as a bonus. While some

people might feel there's an added sales benefit to doing that, that's generally not something I would recommend for the average person seeking to sell through ClickBank. In the end, whether you are engaging ClickBank as an affiliate, seller, or both, you are doing so in large part because of the benefit of overall simplicity and ease-of-use. Having to get involved in shipping out physical items, maintaining an inventory, etc., may not be something you find appealing.

The cool thing about e-products is that you can sell anything that can be digitized. Although I usually speak in terms of ebooks when I speak of ClickBank, you can sell videos, audios, even software. Some of you might see that last one and be thinking, "What? Me? Sell software?" Well...it's not as hard as you probably imagine it to be. In fact, you can have experts develop software for you at a very inexpensive rate. For example, let's say you have a website or blog about consumer finance, and you would like to devise a computer program for budgeting. You can hire someone to create that for you for maybe a few hundred dollars. One company that's well-known for doing this is vWorker (formerly Rent A Coder), which can be found at www.vworker.com. As with other similarly-configured sites, like Elance, you simply post the job you want done on the vWorker site and then choose among the bids you receive from the posting.

One type of digital product that I think represents a real "missed" opportunity for people thinking of going through Clickbank is in the realm of *audio* products. I'm particularly thinking in terms of creating audio products as companions to ebooks. For example, let's say you create a 50-page ebook on a given topic. Depending on a variety of factors, you

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might decide to charge \$25 for that ebook. However, if you create a 45-minute companion audio product to go with that ebook, and sell the two products together, you could easily sell that package for \$50 or more....and creating the audio product is really a very easy thing to do. Most computers manufactured nowadays have a recording function, and you can get a free audio editor...like a neat program that's called Audacity (www.audacity.sourceforge.net)...to help put your audio product together into a saleable form.

All of that said, much, if not most, of ClickBank is ebooks, and that's how they started—with ebooks alone.

Once you've created your product, the next step is the creation of your sales page. Per the rules of ClickBank, your sales page must be at least two pages in length; you must have the sales page, and you must also have a "Thank You" page, which is usually the download page for your customer; that is, after they have made the purchase, the "Thank You" page will generally contain the link that enables your customer to download the product he just purchased. Although you can use a variety of applications to create this, I certainly recommend using ClickBank's preferred sales page application, PitchMagic (www.pitchmagic.com).

Step 3 of the process is to open a vendor account at ClickBank. You must do this before you can actually sell anything. There is an activation fee of \$49.95 required to open the vendor account. Now, before I move on, let me say this, because I know I'll get emails and letters if I don't: there is NO fee to pay if you want to simply sell ClickBank products...that is, if you want to go to ClickBank



and pick out products to sell on your website or blog. However, if you want to create *your own* product(s) and sell those on ClickBank, there is the one-time activation fee of \$49.95 that you must pay.

When someone buys your product, as with credit card processing services and PayPal and other similar sorts of transaction facilitators, a fee is paid, *per* transaction, for *processing* the transaction. In this case this fee is paid to ClickBank, and it is 7.5% of the cost of the product, *plus* \$1. So, that's something you have to take into consideration with respect to all of this...the overall cost of being a vendor, which is the one-time fee of \$49.95, plus the per-transaction costs. Oh, there's also one other fee, which is \$2.50, paid every two weeks when ClickBank sends you your check.

Now, this is important. When ClickBank started, all they allowed for at that time was for one-time sales. Now, they allow for products that involve recurring sales, and those have become very popular. The ClickBank Pirate product, which we spoke about in the previous article, is an excellent exam-

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ple of this. Think about what life would be like if you were ClickBank Pirate...that is, if you were the one who started the product; you would see substantial, monthly residual income as each of your members are regularly billed. ClickBank bills your customers every single month...there's nothing extra you have to do to make the residual billing occur. Residually-billed products will also have a strong appeal to prospective affiliates of yours, as they will see a monthly residual income of their own.

One of the next issues you have to decide on is how much of a commission to pay to your affiliates. This can sometimes be dicey, because many people who create a product are uncomfortable offering a commission that is between 50 and 75 percent. However, remember a couple of things: first, with the thousands of ClickBank products available to sell, prospective affiliates have the luxury of shopping out for those that pay the highest commissions, and will usually select those and discard the rest. Of course, any smart Clickbank affiliate who's shopping for products is looking at them on the basis of quality-of-product, as well, so your product needs to have the requisite level of quality associated with it, but once they are satisfied that it does, they will be interested, quite simply, in how much money they can make.

Second, remember that these are e-products, and an affiliate who deals in this realm knows that developers of e-products don't have near the expenses and overhead associated with bringing a physical product to market, so a higher payout is to be expected. Also, you can't have it both ways; as a ClickBank affiliate, you have access to plenty of products that are offering extraordinary payouts of between 50 and 75 percent. When

you become the vendor, it is expected that the payout you offer will be at a comparable level. If it's not, then you will find yourself benefitting from ClickBank only as an affiliate, because few *other* affiliates will be interested in selling *your* products.

I've made mention here to commission payouts of as high as 75 percent offered by some ClickBank vendors. Those of you struggling with the idea of paying out 50 percent are probably incredulous at the idea of paying out as much as 75 percent. The question then becomes...why pay out so much? Well, some vendors, for whatever reason, might choose to be and remain generous, and perpetually offer products with extra-high payouts. However, the reason most vendors will offer a given product for a high payout is because they are new to this and feel they need to offer an extra incentive in order to gain the attention of affiliates who are unfamiliar with the vendors. If you're new at creating product and are creating your first product or two for ClickBank, it makes sense to set an extra-high payout rate to heighten prospective affiliate interest in "the new guy." Once you've corralled the affiliates with your high payouts, then (hopefully) it will be the quality of your product that will keep them interested in selling for you on an ongoing basis. Once the relationship is in place, your subsequent products might be priced more along the lines of that 50 percent figure, but by then you will be a known, reliable quantity.

Honestly, as great as I think the ClickBank affiliate opportunity is, I think that the vendor opportunity is even more exciting. With what we've discussed here in this article, you should be able to get started as a vendor and begin to benefit from both sides of the amazing ClickBank opportunity.